

Memento Mori

by Exotine

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Summary: The first thing that should be understood about me is that I did not choose the life that I have lived. Fate, destiny, and my own circumstances decided that for me. And I decided that, with seething rage and blind vengeance, fate and destiny are absolute bastards.

Memento Mori

I edited this chapter in preparation for the next one. Please leave a review and let me know what you think thus far.

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><p>Chapter 1: Another Side, Another Story.

The first thing that should be understood about me is that I did not choose the life that I have lived. Fate, destiny, and my own circumstances decided that for me.

When I found my parents dead on the ground, I did not react. I did not cry. Not when I discovered they were missing. Not when they were found dead in an alley a few days later. Not when I figured out that their cause of death was by the hands of the heartless. Not during the funeral while my sister Sian wept beside me. She hit me for my apathy. I was supposed to be upset about this tragedy. But when one has seen so many people die in a single lifetime, the emotions tend to disappear after a while. Sian whispered a cry of lamentation in my arms. I merely studied their bodies and thought it was a pity they died so early.

Heartless roam the streets of Hollow Bastion. I'm used to having to protect myself. My only concern at this point is Sian's safety.

And I decided that, with seething rage and blind vengeance, fate and destiny are absolute bastards.

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><p>"Leaving so soon?"<p>

I held my breath while sliding my hands into a pair of black wired gloves. Dammitâ€"I didn't wanted to wake her her. I hoped to leave the house, do what I had to do, and come back before she woke up. Sianâ€"god bless her heartâ€"nearly passed out from doing so much research for her senior paper in order to graduate as a sorceress. I insisted that she got off her coffee binge and get some shut eye for a change, and she finally heeded my advice a hour or so ago. Based on how little she slept, I hoped she was out for at least a few hours so that I complete this bounty and com back home without her getting mad at me.

The fact is that Sian doesn't like my line of work, and I don't blame her. But it was the only option that puts food on the table and keeps her in school. Even if it means getting blood on my hands in the processâ€|

"Must you leave so soon?" She repeated, platinum eyes full of fatigue and the desire for sleep, yet still glaring accusingly at me. "Can you not turn down the offer?"

I know where this conversation is going. Far too many times we had this conversation, and we both only end up distraught from our opposing opinions.

"Sianâ€|" I sighed. "You know I can't."

"Do I?" She dared. "I don't know why you decided to pursue this path. You could make munny as a musician, you know. You've been honing your talent as a violinist for years. Is that not an option?"

"There are many musicians in Hollow Bastion." I countered. "And all of themâ€"save a selected fewâ€"are barely making minimum wage. Being a musician don't make any munny around here."

"But being a murderer does?"

"_Mercenary_." I grimaced. " Being called a murderer makes it seem my actions are personal, when they are not. I'm in it for the munnyâ€"you know that, Sian."

"Father wouldn't have been happy to see you stoop this low, Iris." She chided.

A combination of irritation and anger flooded me, and I began to scowl. "Maybe, but I know Father would have been happy for you to shut your mouth and not question the only source of income that paying for you to go to become a mage!"

That silenced her. Sian flinched and started to focus on the book laying on the table next to her, and I looked away from her in regret and shame. Recently, most of our days were filled with arguments likes these, but I knew that an invisible boundary was crossed. That was a low blowâ€"even for me.

I let out a frustrated sigh as my hand zipped up my hoodie and rolled

up the sleeves. I need to be more mindful of my temper; it's getting the better of me to the point where it is straining the already frail relationship I have with my sister.

"Iris?"

I slowly gazed back at her, not willing to meet her eyes.

"Yes?"

"I've wanted to ask you this for some time, now: Do you think munny is ever more valuable than a man's life?"

I scoffed, while tightening the laces on my boots. "In this world we live in, when is it not?"

An expression of mild shock reached her face, but I continued before she could interrupt me. "That's the principle around my job, Sian, especially with blood munny. Someone pays to dispose of someone's life. A man's life is always at stake, sis. And the value of that life is often inferior to the value of the munny.

She did not respond, but those eyes hazel eyes of hers widened in surprise. I absently checked my wristwatch and noted the time. 18:43. The bounty had to be submitted by 19:30. I had to get moving if I wanted to pay for Sian's last semester at the academy. Then I could just drop the bounty business and get a less lucrative yet more honest job. The money from thatâ€"when combined with the income Sian would get from her job as Merlin's assistantâ€"would be more than enough to live off of.

At that point, I could finally have my chance of having a peaceful life. The thought of it makes me eager to seal this last and final bounty.

"Listen. You should get some sleep. I'll be back soon." I said.. "I'm just going to get the mission briefing from the safe house, collect the bounty and get the munny."

Sian stared at me for a few moments, and I nervously fiddled with the wires stored among the insides of my gloves. She then turned her back to me, and started to tread back to the safety of her bed with a sign of resignation.

"You promised me you would drop this crap as soon as I graduate." Sian said at last. "Keep your word, and end this shtick."

This time, it was I who was taken aback by the hostility in the other's words. I merely watched her back as she walked up the small staircases that led to the bedroom. For the millionth time, guilt started to gnaw at the back of my mind, but I pushed it aside. Emotions tend to hinder one's ability while taking up a bounty. I'll focus on them on a later time.

But still, her words and her expressions haunt me.

I threw the hood of my jacket over my head and paid no attention to the voices of regret in my head. I checked the insides of my pockets to make sure the bounty slip was still thereâ€"couldn't go far

without it" and slipped on my boots.

Now that I was ready to leave the house, I removed my key necklace and locked the door behind me. The heartless shouldn't be able to get into the house. They aren't strong enough to bust down a door, and are not intelligent enough to pick the blasted lock.

She should be safe. For now, at least.

Satisfied, I flexed my hands and the wires that were stored inside my gloves wriggled out into the palms of my hands. With them, I extended them and wrapped them around a nearby pole to pull myself up onto the rooftops of the nearby houses. And as I proceeded to dart across the various rooftops in the city to the safe house, her voice continued to echo within my mind.

"Keep your word." She told me.

I would, but some promises were destined to be broken.

End
file.